(b) if so, whether the safety jobs have been decentralised; and

(c) the action proposed to re-deploy surplus staff for safety projects ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL) : (a) Each accident including serious ones are inquired into either by Railway officials or by Commission of Railway Safety, an independent body under the control of Ministry of Civil Aviation to establish causes of accidents and make recommendations. As per findings of inquiry reports whosoever is held responsible for an accident irrespective of the level is taken up.

(b) Safety depends on each and every department, officers and staff strictly adhering to rules framed and instructions issued from time to time. Since safety is to be basically ensured by the field level operator, to that extent job of ensuring safety is decentralised.

(c) Surplus staff are re-deployed on alternative jobs as per requirement.

Deplorable conditions in Rajdhani

4400. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item entitled, "seepage rates in Rajdhani coaches make passengers fret" appearing in the Express Newsline dated 3rd August, 2001, regarding the deteriorating condition and quality of service on the prestigious Rajdhanis;

(b) if so, the reaction thereto;

(c) whether it is a fact that the upkeep and maintenance of the Rajdhanis, operating particularly in the Eastern Sector, which includes West Bengal, Assam and Orissa, is getting deplorable; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps being taken to improve the service?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The coaches running on Rajdhani and Shatabdi trains have been examined for water seepage through windows and pest control arrangements have been reviewed and the following action is being taken for improvement :

(i) Window glasses are bing resealed with silicone adhesives.

(ii) Change of window rubber seals has been planned during periodic over-hauls.

(iii) Specialized agencies are being engaged for better rodent control.

(iv) Instructions have been reiterated to tone up the maintenance practices at all the depots responsible for maintenance of coaches and conduct frequent inspections.

(c) and (d) No. Sir. Proper care is taken to ensure proper upkeep of Rajdhani trains which are Indian Railways premium services and their condition is regularly monitored to ensure comfortable journey to the passengers. However, the following additional steps are being taken to improve these services:

(i) Refurbishing of older coaches.

(ii) Improvement in toilet fittings and quality of soap provided in toilets.

(iii) Need-based strengthening of travelling safaiwalas and improvement their work-kits.

(iv) Progressive provision of FL tubelight fittings in place of incandescent lamps.

Gunda-Kottur Rail Line

4401. SHRI K. C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the amount spent so far on the Gunda-Kottur rail line in Karnataka;

(b) the amount earmarked for further transformation;

(c) whether it has come to the notice of Government that work on this track has not progressed;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) by when the above work would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (e) The gauge conversion of Gunda Road—Kotturu section was taken up and completed in March 1996 as a part of Hospet—Hubli